

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 MANILA 06840 200434Z

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /026 W

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P R 200348Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3560

INFO DOD

JCS

WHITE HOUSE

S E C R E T MANILA 6840

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR RP CH VN TW

SUBJ: DISPUTED TERRITORIES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

REF: STATE 116037

1. REFTEL, WHICH OUTLINES OUR FIRM, UNFLINCHING POLICY ON THE SPRATLYS, WAS SENT WITHOUT ANY LIMITATIONS ON ITS DISTRIBUTION. I STRONGLY RECOMMEND THAT IT BE CAPTIONED EXDIS AND THAT DISTRIBUTED COPIES BE RECALLED. IF ITS CONTENTS WERE EVER TO COME TO ATTENTION OF FILIPINOS, THEY WOULD CONFIRM THEIR WORST FEARS AND SUSPICIONS CONCERNING VALUE OF U.S. TREATY COMMITMENTS.

2. I WOULD ALSO RECOMMEND THAT COPY BE FURNISHED CINCPAC SO THAT OPERATIONAL COMMANDERS ARE AWARE OF POLICY GUIDANCE.

3. WHEN YOU REVIEW CONTINGENCIES, PLEASE EXAMINE SITUATION IN WHICH PHILIPPINE NAVAL VESSEL, ON HIGH SEAS, ATTEMPTING TO REACH SPRATLEYS FOR PURPOSE EXTRACTING PHILIPPINE GARRISON COMES UNDER ATTACK OR THREAT OF ATTACK FROM VIETNAMESE NAVAL VESSELS AND SEEKS U.S. NAVAL AND AIR PROTECTION. I THINK I CAN IMAGINE WHAT THE "PREFERRED LEGAL POSITION" WOULD BE, BUT HAVE THE UNEASY FEELING THAT SUCH A CONTINGENCY IS FAR MORE PALPABLE THAN

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WASHINGTON WOULD LIKE TO ASSUME.

4. FINALLY, I TRUST IT IS WELL REALIZED THAT THERE IS A
DIRECT RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN OUR SECURITY TREATY COMMITMENTS
AND THE TENURE OF U.S. BASES HERE IN THE PHILIPPINES. IF
WE CAN EXTRAPOLATE THE "PREFERRED LEGAL POSITION" TO
INCLUDE THE ENTIRE ARCHIPELAGO WITH THE EXCEPTION OF THE
TERRITORY ON WHICH OUR BASES ARE BUILT, THEN WE MUST
ASSUME THAT GOP WOULD BE QUITE SENSIBLE IN ABROGATING THE
DEFENSE AGREEMENT AND DEMANDING OUR IMMEDIATE WITHDRAWAL
FROM THE BASES. THIS IS CLEARLY THE ISSUE WHICH THE GOP
WANTS US TO FACE UNEQUIVOCALLY IN THE REASSESSMENT
REPORTEDLY BEING UNDERTAKEN IN WASHINGTON.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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